

Application No.: 10/821,860Docket No.: 713-1121REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the above-identified Office Action. The above listing of the claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Re-examination and reconsideration in light of the proposed amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Specification

In connection with the Examiner's query re the number of slots and the number of main longitudinal tongues, it is clear from Fig. 4 which is appended to the end of this response, how there can be four slots and two tongues. It is submitted that the use of the phrase "equally spaced angularly" has been changed so that the wording of the specification better reflects the structure shown in the drawings. It is submitted that these amendments merely clarify the disclosure that is describing that which is show in the drawings and do not introduce any new matter.

Drawings

The Examiner's presumption that the drawings are correct, is correct. The phrase "equally spaced angularly" has been removed from the specification and as such the need to amend the drawings as per the inference in this rejection, is rendered moot.

Rejections under 35 USC § 112

In connection with claims 8 and 9, suitable amendments have been made to clarify the structure which is being claimed. It is submitted that the amendments which are set forth above overcome any lack of clarity and definiteness that may have been perceived.

Application No.: 10/821,860Docket No.: 713-1421Rejections under 35 USC § 102

The rejection of claims 1-3, 6 and 13 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Vernet et al. is respectfully traversed.

In this response claim 1 has been amended in a manner which clarifies the structure for which protection is sought and also differentiates over the arrangement disclosed in Vernet et al. The structure which is recited in claim 1 can neither be found in nor distilled from Vernet et al.

The rejection is further traversed in that it improperly uses double inclusion. More specifically, the longitudinal slots 13 of Vernet et al. are relied on to be both the main longitudinal slots as well as the secondary longitudinal slots. If the slots 13 are relied upon to anticipate the main longitudinal slots which are claimed, then they are no longer available to anticipate the secondary slots. The rejection therefore immediately fails to establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103

The rejection of claims 4 and 5 under 34 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vernet et al. is respectfully traversed. The amendments to claim 1 which clarify the structure which is defined therein, also overcome the anticipation rejection. As such the rejections under § 103 are, for at least this reason, rendered moot.

New Claims

New claims 14- 17 are added in this response. These claims are patentable over the art of record in at least they define subject matter which is neither disclosed nor suggested therein. Support for the claims is found in the drawings, and the specification taken as whole.

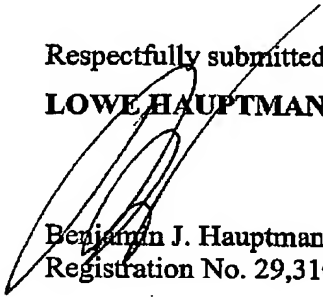
Application No.: 10/821,860**Docket No.: 713-1121**Conclusion

The claims which stand before the Patent Office are allowable over the art for at least the reasons advanced above. Favourable reconsideration and allowance of this application is therefore courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

LOWE HAUPTMAN & BERNER, LLP



Benjamin J. Hauptman
Registration No. 29,310

Customer Number: 22429
1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-1111
(703) 518-5499 Facsimile
Date: February 23, 2006
BJH/jk